

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A method comprising steps of executing a first data transfer command, and delaying ~~execution~~ completion of a second data transfer command to transfer speculative data in lieu thereof.
2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the delaying step further comprises a step of adjudging a utility of the speculative data to be higher than a utility of second data associated with execution of said second command.
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the speculative data are transferred through a next available latency period for the second command.
4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the speculative data are transferred during a time period commencing with conclusion of the execution of the first command and concluding prior to a latency period for execution of a third command.
5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, in which the first command precedes and is directly adjacent the second command in an execution sequence.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, in which the first command precedes and is nonadjacent the second command in an execution sequence.
7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first command is a data retrieval command.
8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the second command is a data transmission command.
9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the speculative data are acquired in conjunction with first data acquired from execution of the first command.
10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, in which resolution of the amount of speculative data transferred during the delaying step is resolved to be a predetermined constant amount of data.
11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9 1, in which resolution of the amount of speculative data transferred during the delaying step is resolved to be a percentage of a buffer segment of a memory.
12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, in which resolution of the amount of speculative data transferred during the delaying step is resolved based on an analysis of previous commands.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, in which resolution of the amount of speculative data transferred during the delaying step is resolved based on an amount of remaining space within a buffer segment of a memory.

Claims 14-20 (Cancelled).

21. (Previously presented) A method comprising steps of transferring first data in response to an execution of a first pending command, and transferring speculative data instead of second data associated with a second pending command during a next available latency period for the second command when the speculative data are adjudged as having a utility greater than a utility of the second data.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising steps of receiving the first and second commands in a queue, and executing a command execution algorithm that identifies the second command as a next best command to be executed after execution of the first command.

23. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, comprising a subsequent step of transferring the second data in response to execution of the second command after the transferring speculative data step.

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, wherein the second command is a write-back command.

25. (Currently amended) An apparatus comprising a controller configured to execute a first data transfer command, and to delay execution completion of a second data transfer command to transfer speculative data in lieu thereof.

26. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the controller is further configured to adjudge a utility of the speculative data to be higher than a utility of second data associated with execution of said second command.

27. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the controller is further configured to subsequently execute the second command to transfer second data after transfer of the speculative data.

28. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the controller is characterized as a controller of a data storage device.